

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding non-final Office Action mailed March 26, 2008 (Paper No. 20080315). Upon entry of this response, claims 45-47 and 49-69 are pending in the application. In this response, claims 45, 47, 49, 64-65, and 68 have been amended, and claims 44 and 48 have been cancelled. Applicants respectfully request that the amendments being filed herewith be entered and request that there be reconsideration of all pending claims.

1. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's allowance of claims 51-69. Applicants also acknowledge the Examiner's indication in the Office Action that claims 49-50 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 49 to include the limitations of its respective base claim, such that claim 49 is now an independent claim. Claims 45-48 have been amended to depend from now independent claim 49. Thus, dependent claims 45-48 and 50 are allowable as a matter of law for at least the reason that each contains all features of independent claim 49. See, *e.g.*, *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to place claims 45-50 in condition for allowance.

Applicants note that amendments were made to dependent claims 45, 49, 64, 65, 68 and 69 in order to provide appropriate antecedent basis. Applicants also wish to clarify that the amendments to claim 49 are made for purposes of presenting the claims in an independent claim format as requested by the Examiner, and not in response to any rejections made based on cited art. Because a dependent claim as a matter of law inherently contains all of the limitations of its respective parent independent claim, and any intervening claims, the amendments to claim 49 do not narrow the scope of claims 49 as originally filed.

2. Rejection of Claims 44-48 under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 44-48 are rejected under §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by *Lebar* (U.S. 5,051,619). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 45-47 is overcome by claim amendments made herein, and that the rejection of claims 44 and 48 is rendered moot by claim cancellation. Claims 45-47 are amended to depend from allowable claim 49. Claims 44 and 48 are cancelled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer, and the rejection of these claims is therefore rendered moot. Applicants take this action merely to reduce the number of disputed issues and to facilitate early allowance and issuance of other claims in the present application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of these cancelled claims in a continuing application, if Applicants so choose, and do not intend to dedicate any of the cancelled subject matter to the public. Applicants expressly reserve the right to present cancelled claims 44 and 48, or variants thereof, in continuing applications to be filed subsequent to the present application.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that all outstanding objections and rejections be withdrawn and that this application and presently pending claims 45-47 and 49-69 be allowed to issue. Any statements in the Office Action that are not explicitly addressed herein are not intended to be admitted. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding Applicant's response, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone Applicants' undersigned counsel.

Respectfully submitted,

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